



Frequently Asked Questions: Required Referrals of Substance-Exposed Infants to Babies Can't Wait

See the BCW website for more detailed information on this topic: <http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/>

What is the rationale for requiring referrals of substance-exposed infants?

Children born to mothers who drink alcohol or use illegal substances such as cocaine, heroin, marijuana, or methamphetamine while pregnant often exhibit an array of health, developmental, and behavioral deficits that frequently impact educational outcomes and can be lifelong. Specific information about the implications of prenatal exposure to any of these substances and related references from the National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse can be obtained at the Babies Can't Wait website: <http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/>

What is the process for making a referral to Babies Can't Wait?

Children 1st is the system point of entry for all Public Health programs for young children in Georgia. Referrals to Babies Can't Wait are made by mailing, faxing or emailing the completed Children 1st Screening and Referral Form to the Children 1st Coordinator in the district which serves the county in which the child resides. Referrals may also be made by telephone. A list of the Children 1st district offices and contact information may be accessed at:

<http://health.state.ga.us/pdfs/familyhealth/childrenfirst/c1st.districtcoordinators.05.pdf>

What happens after a child is referred to Babies Can't Wait?

Babies Can't Wait policy requires that the Babies Can't Wait program must acknowledge receipt of each referral from the primary referral source (the individual or agency that referred the child to BCW) within three (3) working days of receiving the referral. Upon receipt of appropriate written consent from a child's parent or legal guardian, Babies Can't Wait will complete an intake visit, screening, and an evaluation of each child's development, if warranted based upon screening, at no cost to families of all income levels. A team of at least two professionals will evaluate each child's development in all areas, including social development, self-help skills, communication and language skills, motor development, and cognitive skills. If a child is exhibiting significant delays in one or more areas of development as determined through the evaluation or if he/she has a confirmed diagnosis that has been specified as resulting in eligibility, he or she will be eligible for Babies Can't Wait. If eligible, the child and his/her family will receive assistance from a service coordinator in developing an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) that includes their goals for the child. The service coordinator also assists in locating supports necessary to assist caregivers to increase their capacity to support and encourage their child's developmental progress related to their IFSP goals. Those supports and services are required, under federal law, to be provided in settings where the child and his or her family would typically spend time, such as home, child care setting, or other community settings. As a child nears his/her third birthday, the service coordinator would assist the family in learning about resources that might be available after the child's third birthday.

What if I have more questions? What if I need additional information or training on this topic?

Contact your local Babies Can't Wait Early Intervention Coordinator, BCW Parent Educator, or the State Babies Can't Wait office at 404-657-2726 or toll free at 888-651-8224. Or visit the Babies Can't Wait website periodically for updated information: <http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/>